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A rhyme of children, which appears to be an incantation, is mentioned by Thistleton Dyer in his "Folk-Lore of Plants:" "In Cheshire, when children first see the heads of the Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) in spring, they repeat the following rhyme: —

Chimney sweeper all in black,
Go to the wood and wash your back,
Wash it clean, or wash it none,
Chimney sweeper, have you done?

— being in all probability a mode of divination for insuring good luck." —
Charles G. Leland.

A SWEDISH RHYME FOR COUNTING-OUT. — I can well remember the following counting-out rhyme, used by the children in Sweden some years ago, and, I suppose, still current. The vowel *a* has the broad pronunciation, as in father: —

Apála, mezála,
Mezínke, Mezó,
Zebedéy, Zebedó,
Extra, Lára,
Caisa, Sahra,
Häck, Väck,
Wällinge säck,
Gack, Du, din, Långe man's väg ut.

There seem to be three distinct divisions in the above rhyme. The first, beginning with "Apála" and ending with "Zebedó," is entirely foreign to the Swedish tongue, and reminds one, I think, of the Romany. The second division, beginning with "Extra," is a mixture of Latin and biblical names. The meaning of "Lára" is unknown to me. "Caisa" is vulgar Swedish for Catherine, generally spelled *Cajsa*. "Sahra" is a Jewish name, common everywhere. The third division, beginning with "Häck," is Germanic and Swedish. "Häck," as it is spelled here, means a hedge, but very likely it originally meant something else. "Väck," probably meaning "away," is both Germanic and Swedish. The last verse is good Swedish as far as the words go, but has no good sense. Literally translated, it would signify, —

Go, thou, thine, long man's way out.

The second verse from the end is also Swedish, but means nothing rational. Literally translated, it would be "Porridge sack." In the last three lines it may be observed that *ä* is pronounced a broad *ai*, as in pair. Again, *ä* has the sound of a broad *aw*, if pronounced between the lips. The most interesting part of the rhyme is the first three lines, derived, no doubt, from some outlandish "spells." — *Gustav A. Eisen, Delano, Cal.*

THE BLACK SPIDER, A CHILD'S GAME. — The children in this neighborhood have a game they call "The Black Spider," that is new to me. I give it on the chance of its being unprinted. I believe that the playing of games has revived among the children about us, and am glad to think so.

The children choose a Mother, a Nurse, and a Black Spider, the rest are

the children, all of them flies ; they are named after as many species of flies as the children can remember, Horse-fly, Dragon-fly, Day-fly, etc.

The Black Spider keeps out of sight. The Mother prepares to go out. She charges the Nurse to be very careful of her children, and not let the Black Spider get them. She then goes away.

The Black Spider now appears ; she coaxes, wheedles, and frightens the children, until she finally drags one away.

The Mother, returning, exclaims, "Where is my Day-fly?" or whatever may be the name of the child she misses.

The Nurse replies, "The Black Spider has it."

Again the mother goes out, and repeats her former caution. The same thing is repeated, until finally she comes back, and finds that all are gone, even the Nurse. She cries aloud and laments, then searches for the Black Spider. Finding her, she demands her children. The Black Spider, however, will not give them up.

At last the Spider says : "What will you give me for such a one?" naming one of the flies. The Mother offers cake, candy, money, houses, land, anything she thinks of. After a great deal of haggling a bargain is struck, and the fly purchased. This scene is repeated until all are restored, when the Mother goes off in triumph. — *Julia D. Whiting, Holyoke, Mass.*

"The Black Spider" appears to be one of the numerous forms of the game of "Old Witch," several versions of which are given in "Games and Songs of American Children" (Harper and Brothers, 1883, p. 215). The wide European diffusion and numerous variants of this sport show great antiquity. It rests on the universal belief in a race of female child-stealing demons ; a superstition as old as history, and found among the aborigines of America, as well as among civilized nations of Europe. In other games belonging to this root, flowers, birds, or articles of food are used to represent the children. — *W. W. N.*

ANIMISM AMONG THE MODOCS. — Instances of "cordial" intercommunication between persons and animals are frequently met with in the folk-lore of American and other nations, such mental exchanges being based upon the tendency to invest animals with human attributes. A remarkable story of animism was related to me by a Modoc woman in the northeastern part of the Indian Territory in 1885, which was as follows : —

"My mother, Nancy, was bitten by a copperhead snake. She had previously been in communication with a long black snake, wa'm'enaksh, which acted as her tutelary genius. This black snake appeared at the lodge soon after she was bitten, for the snake not only knew what had occurred, but knew also what kind of snake had bitten her. My mother then sang a "medicine" or magic song from morning till noon ; and during these hours the black snake went to see the biter. In the evening she sang again ; the black snake returned and notified her that the copperhead had been "interviewed" and had no desire to bite, but did so only because she had stepped on it. The magic song was then followed by a vision, and the vision revealed to my mother a remedy for the bite, which cured her."

Among this people and the cognate Klamath Lake Indians the term for